THE

WORLD.

NUMBER XLV.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *November* the 8th, 1753.

———*Nectle coronam*
POSTIBUS.——— JUV.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

THERE is hardly a greater inſtance of ill-nature, or a more certain token of a cruel diſpoſition, than the abuſe of dumb creatures; eſpecially of thoſe who contribute to our advantage and conveniency. The doing an ill office to one who has intended us no harm, is a ſtrong proof of inhumanity; but unkindneſs to a benefactor is both inhuman and ungrateful.

BUT

BUT it is not my intention at preſent to animadvert upon our barbarity to the animal creation: if you will accept of ſo unworthy a correſpondent, I may take another opportunity of ſending you my thoughts upon that ſubject: the buſineſs of this letter is only to vindicate from reproach a poor inanimate being, vulgarly called a POST, which everybody knows is held in the loweſt contempt, yet whoſe ſervices to mankind entitle it to a very high degree of regard and veneration.

"As ſtupid as a POST," is a phraſe perpetually made uſe of. If we want to characterize a fool, or a man abſolutely without an idea, the expreſſion is, "as ſtupid as a POST." "As dull as a Beetle," is a term I have no diſlike to; nor have I any great objection to "As grave as a Judge," which I have conſidered as a ſynonymous phraſe ever ſince I ſaw an old gentleman in company extremely angry at being told he looked grave; when it was obſerved by a third perſon, that GRAVE in the dictionary was *vide* DULL. But though it is admitted, that the idea of dullneſs may be illuſtrated by a Beetle, and the idea of gravity by a Judge, I poſitively deny that ſtupidity and a POST have any ſimilitude whatſoever.

IT is well known, that the ancients, and more eſpecially the Ægyptians, the wiſeſt nation of them all, paid the greateſt degree of veneration to ſeveral inanimate things. Almoſt all vegetables were conſidered as gods, and conſequently worſhipped as ſuch. Leeks and onions were particularly eſteemed; and there was hardly a garden to be ſeen that was not over-run with deities. Now I own that I have no ſuch ſuperſtitious regard for a POST, as to recommend it's deification; nor am I for making it miniſter of ſtate, as Caligula did his horſe;

I only think, that when it is undeſervedly branded into a proverb of contempt, common juſtice requires it's vindication.

In former ages, how much Posts were eſteemed, appears from what Juvenal ſays of them:

Ornentur Postes, *et grandi janua lauro:*

where we ſee that they were crowned with laurel. Virgil likewiſe, in deſcribing the deſtruction of Troy, ſays, that the women in the height of deſpair,

Amplexæque tenent Postes, *atque oſcula figunt*;

without doubt to take an affectionate leave of them. And old Ennius, knowing that they were in ſome meaſure ſacred, employs no leſs a perſon than the goddeſs Diſcord herſelf to demoliſh them:

———*Diſcordia tetra*
Belli ferratos Postes, *portaſque refregit.*

But before I conſider the ſervice of Posts to mankind in general, I ſhall take this opportunity of acknowledging the obligation which I have perſonally received from one of them, and which may very poſſibly biaſs me in favour of the whole fraternity.

I was travelling very lately, where I was entirely ignorant of the road, in a part of England too far from town for the common people to give that rational direction to a ſtranger, which they do in and about London; and too near it, as I afterwards found, not to reliſh ſtrongly of it's vices. Coming at laſt to a place, where the road branched out into different paths, I was quite at a ſtand, till ſeeing a country fellow paſſing by, I enquired the road to Biſley. "To Biſley!" ſays he, ſcratching his head, and looking up in my face—— "Where did you come from, ſir?" I was nettled a good deal at the fellow's uſeleſs and impertinent queſtion,

tion, eſpecially as it began to grow duſk; however, that I might get what inſtruction from him I could, I ſatisfied him. He then, after having attentively looked round the country, and informed me I might have come a nearer way, gave me to underſtand, "That he could "not well tell, but that I was not above two miles "from it." P—x take the fellow! ſays I, he is as ſtupid as a Post, and rode on: but I had hardly gone a hundred yards before I diſcovered a Post, which very good-naturedly held out it's finger to ſhew me the road, and informed me in a few words that I had ſtill three miles to go. I followed the advice of this intelligent friend, and ſoon arrived at the end of my journey, aſhamed and vexed at the ingratitude I had been guilty of, in abuſing ſo ſerviceable a guide.

If a man reflects ſeriouſly with himſelf, as I did then, he will find that Posts are very far from being ſo ſtupid as they are imagined to be. I may ſafely venture to aſſert, that they have all negative wiſdom. They neither ruin their fortunes by gaming, nor their conſtitutions by drinking. They keep no bad company; they never interfere either in matters of party or religion, and ſeem entirely unconcerned about who is in favour at court, or who out. Though I cannot ſay that their courage is great, they never ſuffer themſelves to be affronted unrevenged; for they are always upon the defenſive, though they ſeldom give the challenge. Drunkards they have a particular averſion to; nor is it uncommon for a man, though the fumes of wine may have made him inſenſible at night, to feel the effects of their reſentment in the morning. In ſhort, they ſeem devoted to the ſervice of mankind; ſleeping neither day nor night, nor ever deſerting the ſtation which is aſſigned them. One thing I own may be juſtly laid to their charge,

charge, which is, that they are often guilty of cruel behaviour to the blind; though I think they amply repay it, by lending ſupport to the lame.

I COULD enumerate ſeveral ſorts of POSTS, which are of infinite ſervice; ſuch as the MILL-POST, the WHIPPING-POST, the SIGN-POST, and many others: I ſhall at preſent content myſelf with making a few obſervations on the two laſt, the WHIPPING-POST, and the SIGN-POST.

IF to put in execution the laws of the land, be of any ſervice to the nation, which few I think will deny, the benefit of the WHIPPING-POST muſt be very apparent, as being a neceſſary inſtrument of ſuch an execution. Indeed the ſervice it does to a country place is inconceivable. I myſelf knew a man who had proceeded ſo far as to lay his hand upon a ſilver ſpoon, with a deſign to make it his own; but upon looking round, and ſeeing a WHIPPING-POST in his way, he deſiſted from the theft. Whether he ſuſpected that the POST would impeach him or not, I will not pretend to determine; ſome folks were of opinion, that he was afraid of a Habeas Corpus. It is likewiſe an infallible remedy for all lewd and diſorderly behaviour, which the chairman at ſeſſions generally employs it to reſtrain. Nor is it leſs beneficial to the honeſt part of mankind, than the diſhoneſt: for though it lies immediately in the high road to the gallows, it has ſtopped many an adventurous young man in his progreſs thither.

BUT of the whole family of the POSTS, I know none more ſerviceable than a SIGN-POST, which, like a bill of fare to an entertainment, always ſtands ready without the door, to inform you of what you are to expect within. The intent of this has been very much perverted, and accordingly taken notice of by your predeceſſor the Spectator. He was for prohibiting the carpenter the uſe of any ſign but his ſaw; and the ſhoemaker, but his boot;